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(71) Applicant
Anthony Madden,
44 Brantwood Road, Luton, Bedfordshire

(72) Inventor
Anthony Madden

(74) Agent and/or Address for Service
Haseltine Lake & Co., Hazlitt House, 28 Southampton
Buildings, Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1AT

(54) Mobile sports turf

(57) A mobile sports turf comprises a plurality of containers (1) each containing turf (2) having a root portion and a leaf portion, at least part of the root portion of the turf standing proud of the edge of its associated container. Each container is able to abut another such container and is able to be moved, e.g. on a mobile platform, on tracks or pneumatically, so as to permit the interchange of turving areas. A pliable edging strip (5) is joined to the upper edge (1A) of each container to support adjacent turves (2) when the containers (1) abut one another. When incorporated in a sports arena, individual containers (1) can be moved or replaced to facilitate uneven wear of the turves to be equated from within the arena or replacement from spare units, thereby enabling the overall surface quality of the turves to be continually maintained.

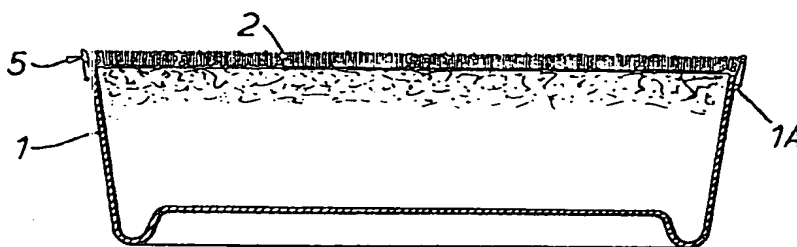


FIG. 2.

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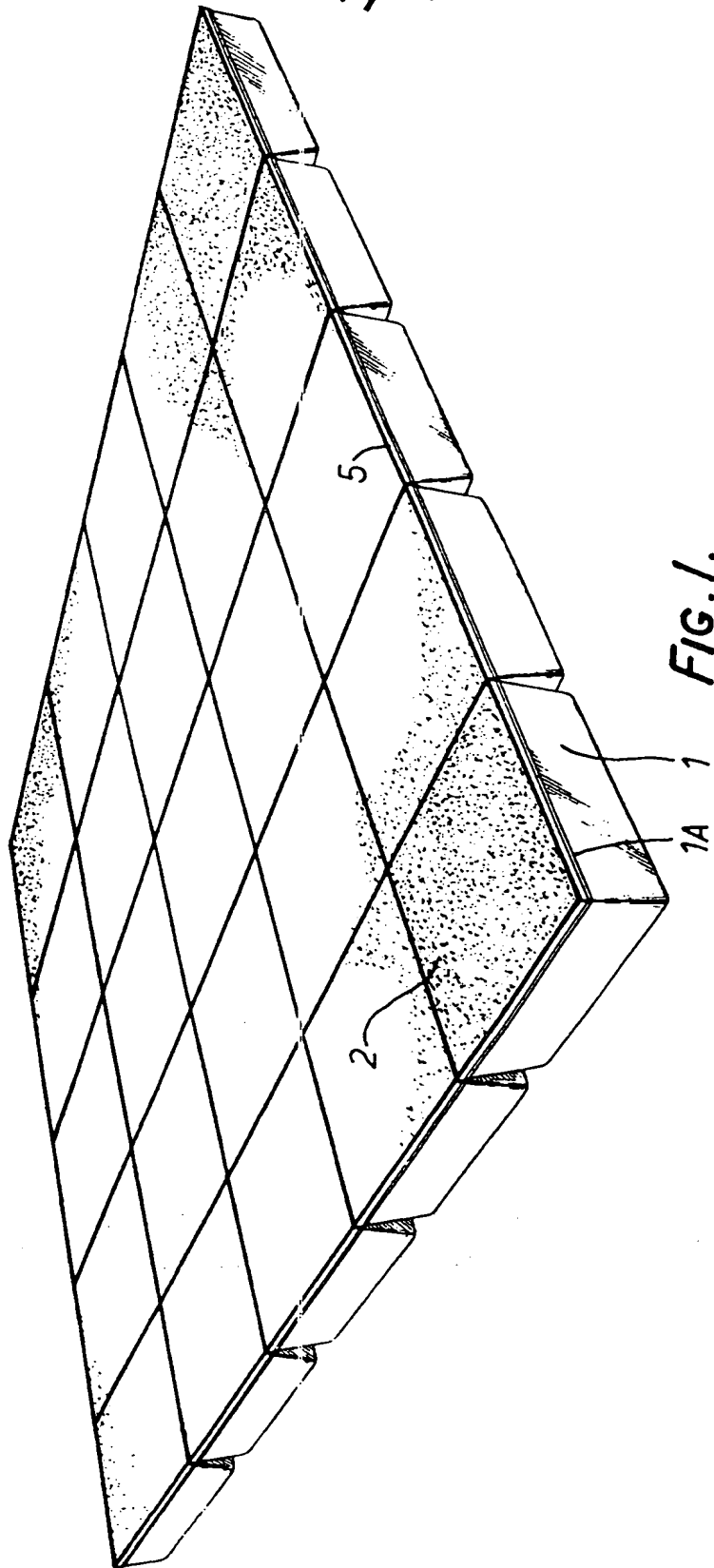


FIG. 1.

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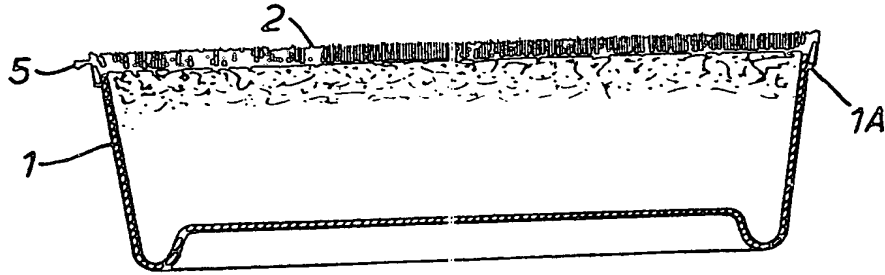


FIG. 2.

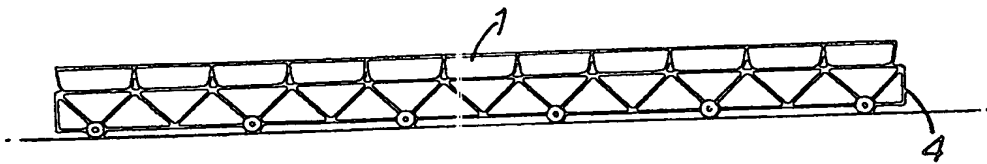


FIG. 3.

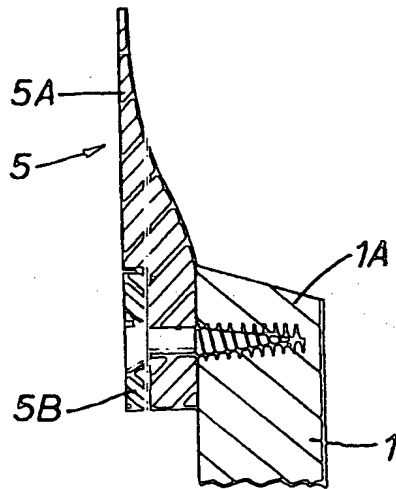


FIG. 4.

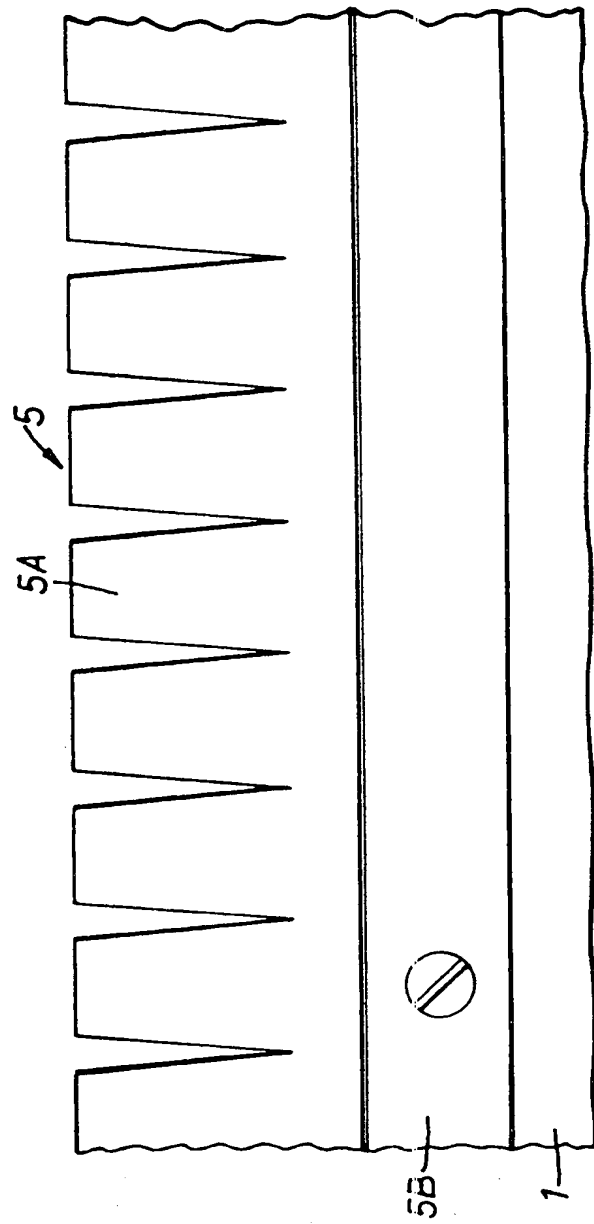


FIG. 5.

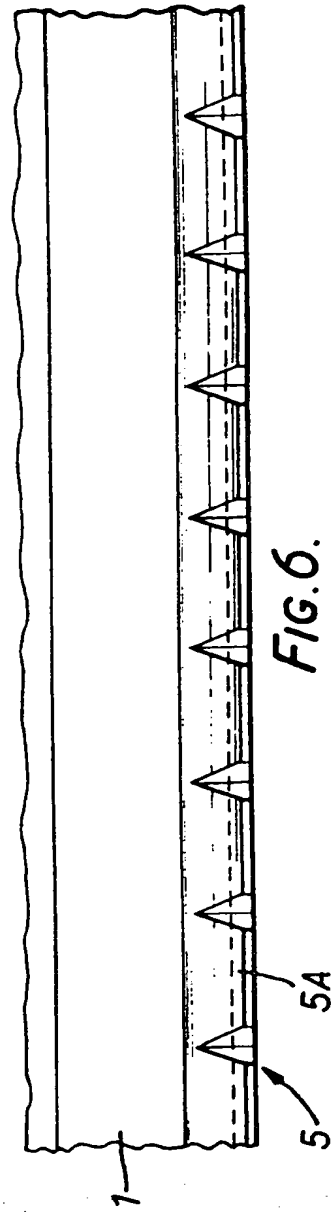


FIG. 6.

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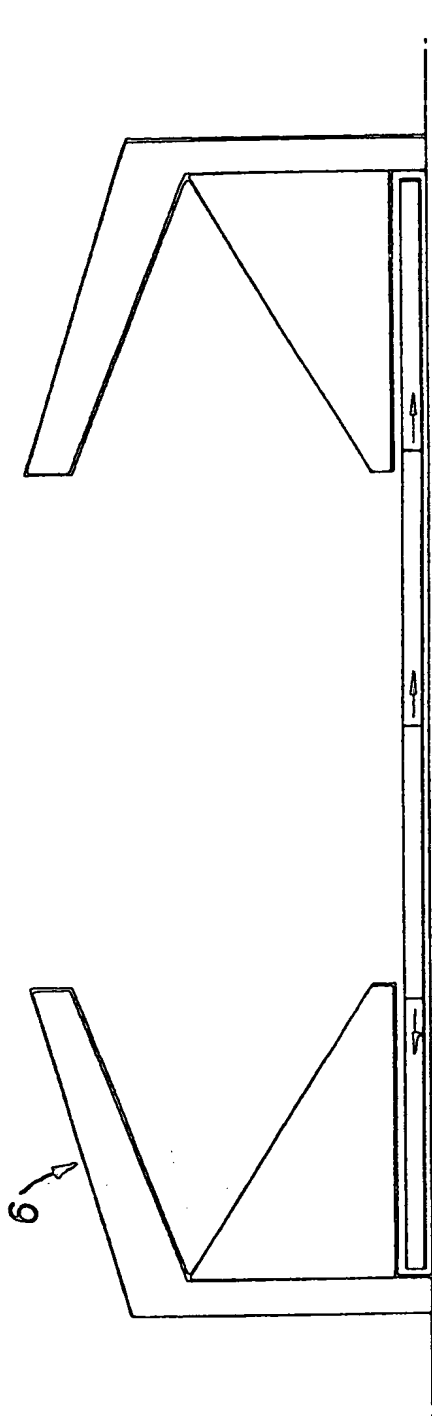


FIG. 7.

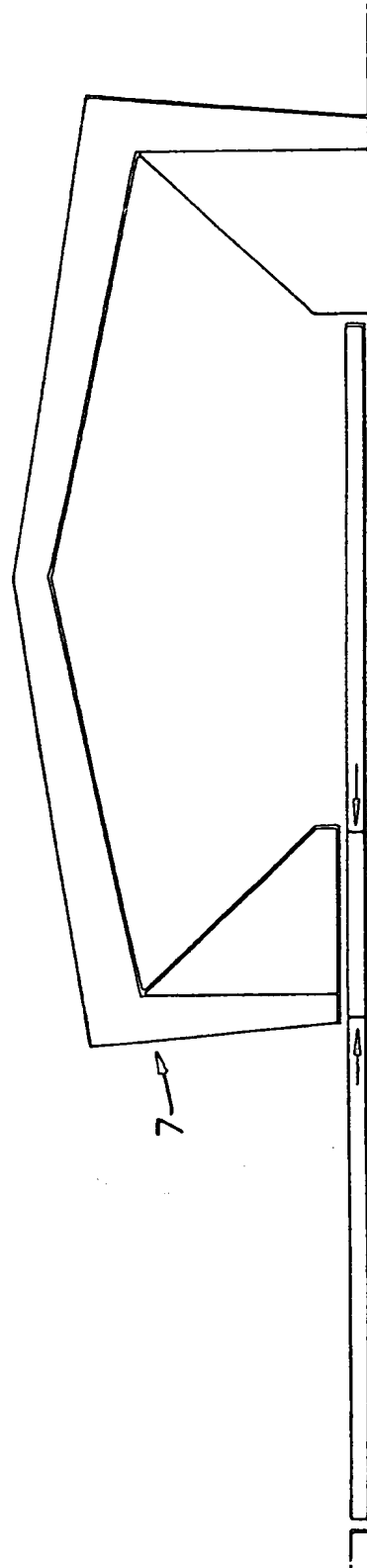


FIG. 8.

SPECIFICATION Mobile sports turf

This invention relates to a mobile sports turf.

There are problems in providing a natural level grass surface in many areas of sport because, for example, of the unkindness of weather prior or during an event, the peculiarities of the sport concerned that can cause excessive wear to parts of the playing surface and because of the previous acceptance that natural turf cannot be used in covered situations. As yet, man-made substitutes have not yet measured up to the qualities of real turf.

According to the present invention, there is provided a mobile sports turf comprising a plurality of stillage containers each containing turf having a root portion and a leaf portion, at least part of the root portion of which stands proud of the edge of the container, and each container being able to abut another said container and being able to be moved so as to permit the interchange of turving areas; and there being a pliable edging strip joined to the upper edge of each container to support adjacent turves when the containers abut one another.

For a better understanding of the invention and to show how the same may be carried into effect, reference will now be made, by way of example, to the accompanying drawings, in which:—

Figure 1 is a perspective diagrammatic view of a plurality of stillage containers making-up the mobile sports turf,

Figure 2 is a side section through one of the containers shown in Figure 1,

Figure 3 is a schematic side view illustrating how the containers of Figure 1 can be mounted on a mobile platform,

Figure 4 is a sectional end view through an upper edge of one of the containers and showing an edging strip joined thereto,

Figure 5 is a side view of part of the edging strip shown in Figure 4 joined to the container, Figure 6 is a view similar to Figure 5 but in plan,

Figure 7 is a schematic side view of a sports arena incorporating mobile sports turf according to the invention, and

Figure 8 is a schematic view of another sports arena incorporating mobile sports turf according to the invention.

Referring firstly to Figures 1 to 6 of the drawings, the mobile sports turf includes a plurality of stillage containers 1 each containing turf 2 having a root portion and a leaf portion, at least part of the root portion of which turf stands proud of an upper edge 1A of the container. Each container 1 may be square or rectangular and may be made of wood, glass fibre or plastics material and can be provided with ribbing to provide strengthening. The containers 1 are able to abut one another and are able to be moved so as to permit interchange of turving areas. For this purpose, the containers 1 can be mounted on a simple mobile platform as illustrated at 4 in Figure 3 or may be mounted on a plurality of such

travelling platforms, or may be pneumatically mounted, tyred or jacked so as to enable a plurality of containers to be moved at the same time.

This mobility provides the facility to move parts of a playing surface about to equate wear, or actually to replace worn areas from a reserve quickly and easily. It also provides the means of controlling light, temperature and moisture to whole surface areas, be it indoors or outdoors. Further, the ability to move a whole turfed surface out of an arena makes it possible to move in or uncover other surfaces such as an ice rink that might make the total sports complex more financially viable. Indeed, various areas of turf can be moved around to form e.g. a tennis court or a football pitch, with the seating arranged accordingly.

The size, material and thickness of each container 1 is determined by the total area to be covered, the needs, soil depth of the particular turf to be grown and, for example, if the containers 1 are to be mobile by flotation, the requirements of the manufacturer of the compressed air equipment to allow such flotation.

A pliable edging strip 5 is joined to the upper edge 1A of each container 1 in order to support adjacent turves 2 when the containers 1 abut one another.

In the example shown, these edging strips 5 extend around the complete upper border of each container 1 and are formed of two parts, viz. a major portion 5A of pliable plastics material and a minor portion 5B of harder plastics material to enable joining of the edging strip 5 to the container 1. As shown this joining is achieved by screws. The part 5A of the edging strip 5 is serrated so that individual tongues formed by this serration can flex when a load is placed on the adjacent turf. The inner sides of the portions 5A of the edging strips 5 have a curvature to suit the modulus of flexibility of the plastics material used and it will be seen that the edging strips allow adjacent containers 1 to abut and are supportive to the turves but are sufficiently pliable for them not to alter the manner of ball behaviour whatever the game being played and for them to permit the participants of the game to make the usual dragging movements into the surface normally associated with the game, players or equipment.

The containers 1 themselves are designed to be able to support the weight and growth of all types of sports turf in level playing conditions, whilst providing the specific advantage of mobility so as to give arena flexibility, indoor or outdoor atmosphere and permit the interchange of worn areas.

Thus, in Figure 7 an outdoor sports arena 6 is shown in which the playing surfaces formed by the turves 2 in the containers 1 can be moved around within the limits of the arena complex so that they can all at one time or another be exposed to the sun and be moved elsewhere as needs be.

Figure 8 shows an indoor sports arena 7 with facility for moving the containers 1 outside into

the open air, for example, onto the roof of an adjacent car park.

Dependent on the size and use of the arena, one or two of the seated areas could be cantilevered from their ends to provide controlled atmospheric storage for the turves beneath whilst also providing a tunnel to outside conditions, should the complex be totally covered, as in Figure 8.

It will be appreciated that, where the containers 1 abut one another, the grass portion of the turves will knit together with the grass portion of the turves in the adjacent containers after sustained non-movement. The provision of the edging strips 5 prevent soil particles from falling between the containers 1 onto the track or hover surface beneath the containers 1, thereby obviating the requirement for suction equipment to remove this ingress.

It will be appreciated that the present invention provides for the facility of obtaining high-quality, durable, level and natural sports turved playing surfaces for use in all climates in both inside and outside situations, this being achieved because the individual containers can be removed or replaced to facilitate uneven wear of the turves to be equated from within an arena or replacement from spare units, thereby enabling the overall surface quality of the turves to be maintained.

CLAIMS

1. A mobile sports turf comprising a plurality of stillage containers each containing turf having a root portion and a leaf portion, at least part of the root portion of which stands proud of the edge of the container, and each container being able to abut another said container and being able to be moved so as to permit the interchange of turving areas; and there being a pliable edging strip joined to the upper edge of each container to support adjacent turves when the containers abut one another.

2. A mobile sports turf as claimed in claim 1, wherein each edging strip extends all around said upper edge of each container.

3. A mobile sports turf as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein each said container is mounted on a mobile platform.

4. A mobile sports turf as claimed in claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein said containers are moveable by pneumatic means from one place to another.

5. A mobile sports turf as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein each edging strip is joined to an associated container by screwing.

6. A mobile sports turf as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein each mobile strip has a first portion of pliable plastics material and a second portion of harder plastics material in the region where the strip is joined to its container.

7. A mobile sports turf as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, and having a serrated upper edge to provide a series of tongues.

8. A mobile sports turf as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein each container is made of wood.

9. A mobile sports turf as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein each container is made of a plastics material.

10. A mobile sports turf as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein each container is made of glass fibre.

11. A mobile sports turf as claimed in any one of the preceding claims and being incorporated in an outdoor arena which has facilities for moving the containers around so that they can be exposed to the sun or moved as needs be.

12. A mobile sports turf as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 10 and being incorporated in an indoor sports arena, that arena having the facility to move the containers beyond the arena to expose the turf to the outside environment.

13. A mobile sports turf, substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.